

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 SAJ-01 ACDA-05 CIAE-00 PM-03

H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01

OMB-01 AID-05 SCCT-01 AF-06 IO-10 /099 W

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P R 031238Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2682

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LISBON 2518

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, PO

SUBJ: NO VIOLENCE AT SOCIALIST PROTEST RALLY

REFS: A. LISBON 2510; B. LISBON 2399

1. IN RESPONSE TO EXCLUSION OF SOCIALIST LEADER MARIO SOARES FROM
MAY DAY RALLY SPEAKERS STAND (REFTEL A), SOCIALIST RANK AND FILE
DEMANDED AND GOT A PROTEST RALLY ORGANIZED ON EVENING OF MAY 2.
DESPITE LAST MINUTE ARRANGEMENTS AND WITH NO HELP FROM THE RADIO,
SOCIALISTS RALLIED ABOUT 50,000 DEMONSTRATORS IN DOWNTOWN LISBON
(ABOUT 10,000 SOCIALISTS MARCHED IN OPORTO).

2. A LARGE CONTINGENT FROM COPCON WAS ON THE LISBON SCENE. FEARS
OF VIOLENCE WENT UNREALIZED, HOWEVER, AS THE CROWD MARCHED
PEACEFULLY THROUGH DOWNTOWN LISBON AND BROKE UP AFTER REACHING
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PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AT SAO BENTO.

3. SOARES HAD ATTEMPTED TO DOWNPLAY THE MAY 1 AFFAIR. THE FIRST PARTY COMMUNIQUE ON THE SUBJECT ISSUED EARLY IN THE MORNING OF MAY 2 WAS RATHER MILD. HOWEVER, AN OUTRAGED RANK AND FILE DEMANDED AND GOT PUBLICATION OF A STRONGER COMMUNIQUE LATER IN THE DAY. SOARES WANTED TO AVOID A PROTEST RALLY BUT WAS FORCED INTO IT BY THE RANK AND FILE.

4. COMMENT: THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNIST-LINING INTERSINDICAL IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE STRAINS ON THE INITIAL PS POLICY OF TREATING THEIR MAJOR ELECTION VICTORY OVER THE COMMUNISTS IN LOW-KEY FASHION AND LETTING THE NEW POLITICAL DYNAMIC WORK ITSELF OUT WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT (REFTEL B) RATHER THAN IN PUBLIC CONFRONTATIONS WITH THE PCP.

5. WITH MAY DAY COMING ONLY SIX DAYS AFTER SOCIALIST'S ELECTION TRIUMPH, EARLY CONFRONTATION WAS, IN PART, FORTUITOUS. BUT IT IS PROBABLY A HARBINGER OF THINGS TO COME: COMMUNISTS, STUNG BY ELECTION SETBACK, ARE INCREASINGLY AGGRESSIVE (PCP-DOMINATED TYPESETTERS UNION, FOR EXAMPLE, REFUSED TO PRINT SOCIALIST PAPER "REPUBLICA" LAST NIGHT); SOCIALISTS, ESPECIALLY RANK AND FILE, ARE EAGER TO COME OUT SWINGING. OUTLOOK IS THUS FOR TROUBLE -- POSSIBLY STREET VIOLENCE.

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